DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 509

PS 028 477

TITLE	Leaders in the Making: New Pathways to Quality. Taking the Lead. [Videotape].
INSTITUTION	Wheelock Coll., Boston, MA. Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	0p.; Sponsored by The Early Childhood Funders Collaborative.
AVAILABLE FROM	Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education, Wheelock College, 200 The Riverway, Boston, MA 02215-4176; Tel: 617-879-2211; Fax: 617-738-0643; e-mail: Centers@wheelock.edu; Web site: http://www.ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/ccdece/ccdece.html (26-minute VHS video, $49.95, plus $7.00 shipping. Make checks payable to Wheelock College).
PUB TYPE	Non-Print Media (100) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Qualifications; *Administrators; *Day Care; *Early Childhood Education; *Educational Quality; *Leaders; *Leadership Training; Mentors; Partnerships in Education; Professional Development; Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation; Videotape Recordings
IDENTIFIERS	Day Care Quality

ABSTRACT

"Taking the Lead" is an initiative of The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education at Wheelock College, working in partnership with other national organizations and government policymakers. The initiative is intended to build the capacity of the early care and education field to improve program quality by: (1) improving access to leadership development opportunities, building infrastructure, and expanding skills of new and existing leaders; and (2) advancing the development of a director credential for administrators/directors of early care and education programs. This 26-minute videotape presents interviews with emerging leaders, mentors, and collaborators at 4 of the 10 "Taking the Lead" sites nationwide to illustrate important lessons and guidelines culled from 2 years of intense leadership development activity. Each of the four programs used a novel approach to leadership training embedded in community values: using mentors in church-based child care programs in Virginia and Chicago, developing a professional association in Massachusetts, initiating a director credential in Oklahoma, and developing leadership training using traditional Eskimo values. Five essential elements of leadership common to the four programs are identified as predictive of program success: (1) community partnerships; (2) cultural/community context; (3) relevant/innovative content; (4) mentoring; and (5) opportunities to exercise leadership. An accompanying facilitator's guide describes the videotape, provides a list of pre- and post-viewing discussion questions, and suggests ways that facilitators might focus on the five essential elements of leadership development. The guide also lists quotations from the videotape to be used as the basis for writing assignments or as topics for discussion groups. (KB)

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